



# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0725CO-1 for Brush School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	3
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The vision statement identifies core components of the applicant's vision, linking home/community to K-12 to postsecondary/workforce considerations. The vision identifies several components meant to address local economic conditions and the challenges of distance and isolation, largely through additional technology resources, but also with some personnel (e.g., traveling home liaisons, online curriculum director, etc.). The plan builds a vision based on agricultural metaphors, appropriate to its rural community, and explicitly notes the need to address the support needs of family and community.</p> <p>There is less evidence in the applicant's vision of coherence across the component pieces, nor an attention to how the components build upon work in the four core educational assurances. Data regarding the community seems unclear, as does linkage to a credible approach to accelerating student achievement in K-12. There appears to be considerable confidence in the likely impact of additional technology and personnel resources, though their connecting to deeper student learning and/or personalization seems undefined. Essential baseline data collection to inform the vision has been promised but not yet addressed.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application presents a moderately strong approach. The application indicates the criteria for selection, but does not describe the actual process by which schools were selected to participate nor how they meet the criteria of the competition; the number of participating students varies within the application.</p> <p>The eight participating schools are indicated, as are the total numbers of participating students by category requested.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application does not address this selection criterion, except to indicate that all students will be served. While this may address minimally the lack of need to scale, no logic model or theory of change is provided.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	2
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application provides general goals and a series of activities implemented/to be implemented from 8/12 through Spring 2013; deliverables are vague, as are responsible parties. An indication of the alignment of the applicant's aspirations with the aspects of ESEA are noted, as are a good number of future initiatives or efforts indicated. Little evidence nor argument/logic is provided in support of how these elements would result in improved student learning and performance, nor how they link to either the aspirational goals at the onset of the section or the numerical targets at the end. Little evidence is provided regarding how the vision would increase equity in any specific ways or via specific mechanisms, beyond the general increase in resources. This reader was unable to locate corresponding appendices as cited in the text. The meaning of the numerical targets in the charts, relative to the 13 or so assessments noted, is unclear. The methodology for determining proficiency status is unclear, missing for achievement gaps. It is unclear how the applicant's vision links to the dramatic increases in some of the targets; e.g., postsecondary degree attainment would nearly triple post-grant, mirroring college enrollment rate hikes.</p>		

### B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>No narrative is provided indicating the linkage of evidence to any claims regarding improved student outcomes, closing achievement gaps, achievement of ambitious and significant reforms, or provision of access to such data for students, parents, and educators in order to improve participation, instruction and services. Copies of district performance framework reports are included in the appendices, though no claims are made regarding any record of success based upon these data. The appendices present a very mixed picture of achievement and growth.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	1
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The LEA demonstrates evidence of a high level of transparency regarding expenditures, per this selection criterion, for the Brush School District (62 pages of appendices). No comparable evidence is provided for the districts of Wiggins, Prairie or Pawnee.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	3
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant claims to have the "individual autonomy to complete all of the activities we have listed in the proposal." No specific reference to personalized learning environments per se are made in this section's brief claim. The applicant offers letters of local and county stakeholder support as evidence, though the criterion refers to legal, statutory and regulatory environments. Insufficient evidence is provided regarding the state environment.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence of some meaningful stakeholder engagement, starting with the origin of interest in the proposal from the Brush School District Supt, with a series of discussions regarding technology following. The application claims that a number of local stakeholders were consulted subsequently. Some 30+ letters of support are provided in the appendices from a wide range of community stakeholders, from local advisory committees, to individual professionals, to representatives from local colleges, the chamber of commerce, Head Start, local BOCES, etc.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant indicates a wide range of data examined in order to identify student needs, from national test data to individual student goals to daily assessments. The data are used in an unspecified data analysis procedure, though with checkpoints "daily, some weekly, monthly, quarterly and some yearly." It is difficult to assess the means by which the data and/or analysis specifically will guide their implementation of personalized learning environments.</p>		

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	7
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence of a plan to increase and enhance resources, online and onsite, for parents, community and students. Special outreach to parents and community appears central to the proposed approach. Overall additional resources include district home liaisons, tablet mobile devices, additional extension classes, a new computer lab, after-school STEM classes and more. A wide variety of data is cited that will be monitored, with the professional learning community time to be used for discussions of student growth. Staff professional development related to curriculum and instruction are ongoing. Alignment of local and state standards are noted. The reader is sent to a general reference for appendices.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence of a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning</p>		

environment, per the selection criterion, nor outlines approaches that engage and empower all learners, in particular high-need students, in an age-appropriate manner, per the sub-criteria a-c above. While a variety of resources are cited, little evidence is provided regarding access to personalized instructional strategies, college and career-ready goals, ongoing and regular feedback loops/mechanisms, accommodations for high-needs students, etc. Evidence for any specific training and support to students regarding new tools/resources is not provided.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

4

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application indicates applicant commitment to changes in principal and teacher evaluation in the state of Colorado, and claims the importance of pedagogical skill, effective supervision and teacher quality. The applicant notes that their "staff accepts responsibility of teaching and administration very seriously."

The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence of a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment, nor regarding how teachers and leaders will engage in training, and in professional teams or communities; have access to, and know how to use, tools, data, and resources to accelerate student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready graduation requirements; provide all participating school leaders and school leadership teams with training, policies, tools, data, and resources that enable them to structure an effective learning environment; and a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals, including in hard-to-staff schools, subjects (such as mathematics and science), and specialty areas (such as special education). Evidence supporting sub-criteria to these components are not provided.

## D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	4
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant provides evidence of a consortium governance structure and resources, via Brush and an intra-district PLC, along with plans for provision of support and services to the balance of the consortium, including through the use of collaborating community institutions. Autonomy at sites is indicated, in terms of pedagogy and use of digital resources; evidence is not provided regarding site leadership autonomy regarding factors such as schedules, budgets, personnel, etc. The plan does not address the final three sub-criteria.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The application provides a moderately high-quality approach. The applicant claims open access to all materials for all students, parents, educators or other stakeholders. Online and in-person activities are indicated as means of dissemination and support, via coordination among tech and counseling staffs. Current and potential staff support, in addition to vendor help desk support, are described, particularly at Brush School District. All four participating districts participate in the state's Data Pipeline. Whether the information technology system allows students and parents to export their information in an open data format, use the data in other systems or tools/software is not addressed.</p>		

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	5
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant indicates a plan for monitoring the implementation of technology tools, starting with an open door policy to the Director of Technology and the Online Curriculum Director. An initial process of daily checkpoints will evolve over the first six weeks to a monthly meeting of the district leads with the Director of Technology and the Online Curriculum Director. As an ongoing process, the district's Professional Learning Community will continue to operate, as would a series of formal and informal meetings and discussions -- including discussions at grocery stores and football games.</p> <p>The applicant does not provide sufficient evidence of any targeted means for monitoring progress toward specific investment goals from the application.</p>		

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	0
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments: Evidence provided here repeats verbatim the evidence provided for E1 above. No additional information regarding ongoing communication and engagement strategies is offered.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	1
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides no rationale for selection of the performance measures, beyond that they are based upon the Colorado Dep of Education rubrics, nor an indication of how the data will provide leading information, nor how the applicant plans to review or improve the measure, should that be needed. The patterns of targets appear consistent across the tables, moving from 50% to 100% in the same increments. The targets used for student performance are unclear; i.e., what the numbers in each cell measures is not stated.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments: No material is provided for E4.		

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	3
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The applicant provides an inspirational opening narrative, and a delineation of what the proposed budget will purchase, listing some 30 items. Allocation per project is not indicated, and the budget tables only provide a summary of all projects by categories. That table includes a few computational errors, across lines 4 and 13. Some of the items listed in the narrative appear to be available independent of the grant, to the degree web access now exists in the district and community. Personnel costs represent 56% of total funds requested (appr 16 positions), followed by equipment at 32%; direct spending on training stipends represents 5%. The funding would appear, on a gross level, to be adequate to address the general plan offered. Specific computer equipment and technology is indicated. Linkage of these specific investments to sub-goals, strategies, timelines, metrics or change logic of the proposal is absent. Identification of funds for one-time versus ongoing costs is not provided.  Other funds include a prior RUS grant, general operating budget, and a planned proposal for a mill levy override. The applicant claims that this will lead to a "self-sustaining systemic change," though no figures or evidence is provided. The applicant indicates that other sources will total \$8,000,000 (though the computation seems off; the table appears to indicate \$16,000,000. The breakdown of sources within this category is not provided.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: It is unclear from the application that a high-quality plan for sustainability exists. Other funds identified to support the projects include a prior RUS grant, general operating budget, and a planned proposal for a mill levy override. The applicant claims that the positive outcomes of the initiatives planned will provide the impetus for securing additional funds. The applicant claims that this will lead to a "self-sustaining systemic change," though no figures or evidence is provided.  The applicant indicates that other sources will total \$8,000,000 (though the computation seems off; the table appears to indicate \$16,000,000. The breakdown of sources within this category is not provided. Uses of specific funds are not identified.		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
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Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	3
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Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides evidence of a range of local organizations involved and supportive of the application. Results identified range from measurable to aspirational; the means for tracking those indicators, using them to target resources and develop a model for scaling are not specified. Several procedures are noted that testify to planned dissemination and discussion across organizations, and future development of tools to assist that process. How the partnership and consortium will build site capacity of participating schools remains unclear, as the narrative repeats verbatim a prior section's response. The tables of performance measures lack specificity, in terms of measurable results, identified targets behind numerical values (e.g., "success to each student based upon the best of their ability performance on national, state and local performance based assessments" - the measures then range from 20-100 with unclear units).

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

While the applicant provides compelling indication of needs in the district, and provides evidence of a commitment to collaborate by numerous community organizations, the proposal does not provide sufficient evidence to address the core educational assurance areas as defined in this notice. The application proposes increased use of distance technologies appropriate to its rural context, and yet little evidence of coherent and comprehensive planning is provided regarding the actual means by which personalization of tools, strategies and supports; acceleration of achievement; deepening of learning; increased educator effectiveness; expanded student access; decreased achievement gaps; or increased graduation rates would occur.

Total	210	67
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0725CO-2 for Brush School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	4

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant documents a strong need for this project based on such factors as its geographical location, demographics (family income and educational levels), training, skills and numbers of professional staff, and the resources of its schools. Some excellent activities and approaches are proposed to address this need. In regard to students, families will have community classes offered through varied delivery systems at selected schools to assist them in providing support to their children in their learning. Traveling home liaisons will be added to existing staff to identify and reach families with preschool aged children to provide suggestions and hands on educational activities and assist families in increasing skills in literacy and math. In regard to teachers, Professional Learning Communities will be used to help teachers gain more depth and capacity in effective instructional practices. Teachers will use the mobile recording stations and equipment to record their work and record that of other exemplary teachers to use improving teaching skills.

Technology will be used to expand student learning and online curriculum director who will coordinate distance learning with activities to

best meet the unique needs of each school. Hub sites will be created and will utilize trained educators specializing in STEM class strategies that will then be broadcast to the other consortium members to increase depth of knowledge in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math for students and staff. One interesting and potentially innovative activity proposes is the use of mobile workforce training sites and career exploration activities with a variety of businesses to assist students in developing useful workforce skills. Virtual interactive labs can be broadcast from sites such as a Medical facility, Biochemistry lab or Veterinary Hospital, stored, archived and then delivered to any of the hub sites.

However, the applicant does not adequately connect activities to a comprehensive and coherent vision. Activities are presented primarily as separate and disconnected activities rather than as a structured well-articulated and coordinated program. The applicant does not adequately address the four core reform areas. For instance, little is said about standards and assessments or building on data systems. In addition, some of the proposed activities could be accomplished by the applicant without necessarily needing outside funding. In other words, the applicant does not provide a vision that builds and extends their own capacity for meeting identified needs. For instance, it is noted that, in regard to increasing student postsecondary information and awareness students travel to an area site to share information in a limited time period. At these sessions some question time is available, but usually it is completed as a whole or small group setting. The applicant notes that there is little time for students and their families to see if their goals and aspirations dovetail with that of the institution. Students leave their small, rural settings here and arrive at large institutions where they have little support systems, or prior knowledge of who they could ask for assistance from. The applicant proposes that as part of this project students will have opportunities to work with graduates who are currently enrolled in post-secondary institutions with video conferencing projects and college prep activities. Virtual college visits and interviews and in depth conversations with college staff will be possible. Access to college resources such as specialized libraries will be utilized online. Virtual job fairs and job skills classes will be accessible for career preparation. While these are appropriate activities that are likely to be effective, they are also activities that could be completed by the applicant, to some degree, without additional funding. So, this section would be improved by providing more information regarding how the applicant would use project funds to extend their present capacity and to connect with existing activities and potential activities.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)

10

5

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a list of schools that will participate in project activities. Data are provided with the list that describes the numbers and percentages of students who meet various project criteria such as need, income, and so forth. However, although the applicant does describe the criteria by which consortium members were selected to participate, it does not provide sufficient information regarding the process used to select schools. This section would be improved by providing a narrative to describe the process used as well as the criteria.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

2

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Since the applicant is involving all of its schools in this proposal, it could be argued that it is already meeting this criterion. However, the applicant could have provided some information and explanation regarding how it will scale up its reform vision beyond the parameters proposed by this plan. Therefore, this criterion does not receive the full value of points available.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

5

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a number of goals that identify important areas of need and concern. However, goals are not expressed in behavioral or measurable terms to determine if they are appropriate or if they are sufficiently ambitious or achievable. Some additional narrative that would link the proposed goals to specific needs and gaps would be helpful. Later in the section the applicant does provide some data on proposed increases in academic achievement and in college enrollment. However, there isn't a strong or direct connection between the more general goals presented at the beginning and the more specific goals provided in the tables at the end of this section. No data were noted on graduation rates, although there is a goal provided for it. The goals provided in the tables at the end of the section need some narrative and context to better understand if they are ambitious or achievable in relation to the applicant's vision.

A great number of activities are provided in support of the proposed goals. These activities are appropriate and should be effective. The applicant provides information regarding the products to be obtained from each activity, the timeline for each, and who is responsible for the activity. This will assist in the management of the project. However, these activities are not well connected to the proposed goals for the project as described by the applicant.

The applicant also provides a discussion of activities and strategies currently being utilized as a result of other programs and projects, such as Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV. However, it is difficult to determine how this project will build on and extend the activities being

provided through these other programs. Nor does the applicant describe other efforts being used to achieve the proposed project goals.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	3
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides some evidence that it has been successful in improving student achievement in some of its schools in some areas of performance and demographics. Data provided in the School View tables indicate that performance and achievement gaps in some schools have been decreased. Based on the data provided in the tables the applicant appears to have had some modest success in improving student achievement, but its ability in this regard is not strong. The applicant does not provide a context or a narrative to better understand the progress that has been made in such areas as academic achievement, school graduation or college enrollment. For instance, low-achieving schools are not well identified, making it difficult to determine if this part of the criterion is being addressed.</p> <p>In addition, the applicant does not provide information or data regarding if and how student performance data is made available to students, educators and parents or how it is used to improve participation, instruction, and services. This section would be improved if the applicant would provide a discussion of this process.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence that information regarding school level expenditures are available in specific documents and these documents are available to the public in a variety of ways, including through its website, public meetings and publication in local media. School Board meetings are streamed through the Internet so that the public, in general, has access to the information discussed at the meetings. The applicant doesn't sufficiently describe how the documents and information provided through these various avenues demonstrates how various stakeholders have access to budget information to the level required by this criterion or the specific categories of information that is provided. For this reason, this section is not given the full number of points available.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant is composed of public school districts that have autonomy to implement activities described in the application. Letters of support indicate that various agencies, organizations and entities needed to accomplish project activities are willing to provide the necessary support and flexibility to the applicant. In this section the applicant doesn't provide adequate information regarding conditions that would assist the applicant in implement project activities, particularly in regard to local conditions, practices, resources, etc., or how it would specifically ensure that personalized learning environments will be implemented and provided to students.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	5
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides evidence that a number of entities and stakeholders were consulted regarding the proposed application. This included school board members, related organizations and parents. There are also support letters from key stakeholders. However, the applicant doesn't clearly identify how parts (i) and (ii) of this criterion was addressed in regard to teachers at participating schools. Also, the applicant does not adequately describe the process for obtaining input and engagement from stakeholders. For instance, the applicant notes that various stakeholders were "consulted" but does not adequately describe the process of consultation. A more complete description of the nature, content and format of the process would be helpful. Also, applicant does not adequately describe how the proposed was revised as a result of feedback and engagement.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant currently has a number of approaches and systems for addressing gaps in student achievement. For instance, students having difficulty in succeeding in a traditional school setting may participate in a traditional alternative school setting at Lincoln School or a digital media credit recovery school overseen by Centennial</p>		

BOCES called iConnect. Not only do the students track their work on progress monitoring tools, but teachers work in small groups and one on one with feedback. Two advanced placement classes are taught at Brush High School, Chemistry and Calculus, and a class called Extended Learning in which activities are presented to students designed to help increase high order thinking skills and spotlight talents is also available.

However, problems with this section include the following:

1. The applicant doesn't provide a cohesive, explicit and well-conceived model to drive its reform plan. The stated goal that, "All students must be actively engaged to the best of their ability in creating their individual plan for success and they must get feedback from a variety of resources to offer reliable data checkpoints," is certainly commendable it does not provide sufficient depth or detail to serve as a logic and planning model.
2. The applicant does not describe specific, organizational goals. It is noted in the narrative that students set their own goals based on their individual achievement. While student established goals certainly have a place in effective instruction, there should be broader, over-arching organization goals that are specific, consistent and measurable to drive reform.
3. A well-designed, consistent and specific plan is not adequately described regarding how the applicant will analyze and identify needs and gaps to be addressed.

### C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	12
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a number of interesting and potentially effective approaches to better preparing students for college and careers. A community digital learning content hub site model is a nice feature of the proposal. Starting at the preschool level is a strong component, as is the use of mobile devices to support the preschool parent education, although the exact nature of the use of the mobile device is not described adequately. Other issues that make this section weaker than it would be otherwise include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The section has a general lack of focus and cohesiveness. The applicant doesn't provide an overall structure or framework for planning, implementing, evaluating and revising (as necessary) its plan for preparing students for college and careers.</li> <li>2. The applicant doesn't adequately describe how it will use data to inform and guide instruction. It is mentioned that data will be collected and that the data will be used, but doesn't provide enough detail about the process to determine if it is appropriate and adequate.</li> <li>3. The applicant does not sufficiently describe how instruction will be organized, how it will link to college and career readiness standards and how it will identify students and match students to instruction.</li> <li>4. The mechanisms for providing training and support to students in using tools and resources are not sufficiently described.</li> <li>5. The link between the parent/family training and classroom instruction is not well-described and the training is not well-focused, but appears to be somewhat of a "shotgun" approach. Sharpen the focus and provide more detail about how the topics are identified, how instruction will be delivered, how parents will be identified and recruited for participation.</li> <li>6. The curriculum to be incorporated and how it is determined is not explained sufficiently.</li> <li>7. The applicant does not describe a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments as identified in this criterion.</li> </ol>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	9
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a new teacher and administrator evaluation system that will be implemented within the next few years. However, although some discussion is provided regarding how stakeholders are being made aware of the new system, the applicant does not describe the components of the system or how it will help school leaders assess and improve educator effectiveness. And, while the applicant notes that it fully embraces and supports the concepts of this criterion, there is insufficient information and explanation of how that will be done. No</p>		

discussion is provided of how participating educators will engage in training and in professional teams or communities to accomplish such tasks as supporting the effective implementation of personalized learning environments and strategies, adapting content and instruction, providing opportunities for students, measuring student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards, and improving teachers' and principals' practice and effectiveness by using feedback.

The applicant does not describe how the proposed project will help educators in the applicant schools identify optimal learning approaches that respond to individual student academic needs and interests or how it will use high-quality learning resources, including digital resources that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards, and the tools to create and share new resources; or how the project will allow the applicant to use processes and tools to match student needs with specific resources and approaches.

The applicant does not describe how it will design and adapt project activities and resources to meet the needs of exceptional students, such as those receiving special education services. This section is overly broad and general and does not provide any details to sufficiently determine the quality of a plan to accomplish the proposed project goals. For instance, insufficient information is provided regarding how the district would create and implement personalized learning environments for its students. Therefore, the maximum number of points is not awarded for this criterion.

## D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	7
(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant describes infrastructure to support project activities and goals. Rooms will be provided for growth and placement of digital delivery classrooms, a full time Technology and IT Director, a full time Director of Learning Services, full time IT staff, and the highest numbers of economically disadvantaged and English Language Learners will also be provided. The applicant also describes a community of workforce sites, employers, service organizations, and city infrastructure available to support the project, as well as resources from the area's postsecondary institution.</p> <p>The applicant also describes how autonomy for each district will be ensured by the ability to archive and store digital content to enable each school to supply education to its students "anytime, anyplace." Hand held mobile recording devices will be available at each site to ensure contributions from each member of the consortium in supporting and enhancing learning for all students. These mobile devices will also be used to record teachers teaching and will be used for self-reflection and examples of effective teaching that can be archived and used at will for district or school professional development.</p> <p>While the use of the mobile digital devices is a potentially useful and effective instructional tool, the use of the devices by students to enhance and extend their learning is not well-described. Other issues that reduce the effectiveness of this section include the lack of information on the applicant' practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning by organizing the consortium governance structure to provide support and services to all participating schools; how the applicant will provide school leadership teams in participating schools with sufficient flexibility and autonomy over factors such as school schedules and calendars, school personnel decisions and staffing models, roles and responsibilities for educators and noneducators, and school-level budgets. The applicant also does not describe how it will give students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic. The applicant also does not sufficiently explain how it provide learning resources and instruction practices that are accessible to students with disabilities. This prevented this criterion from receiving the maximum number of points for this criterion.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>The applicant describes an infrastructure to provide appropriate technology to stakeholders. The Director of Technology, with his staff of three IT department employees are responsible for coordinating the consortium shared technology efforts and working with tech support from the companies from which the technology is purchased to problem solve and fix problems in a timely manner. The Director of Technology will then work hand in hand with appropriate individuals to deliver technology with appropriate levels of support to the consortium regarding materials recorded, stored and archived. Each consortium member will designate technology lead people who will be responsible for meeting the needs of their building(s), and districts.</p> <p>There is also a strong plan described to support parents, students and other stakeholders in accessing digital learning resources. Each district lead representative will work with existing counseling and tech staff as well as classroom teachers and administrators in the dissemination of information to community stakeholders. Informative classes will be offered to families and students at the individual sites via digital devices such as computer tech labs offered as public access labs, promethium board classroom presentations, streaming via home and public library computers.</p>		

A weakness of this section is the lack of sufficient describing how the applicant and its stakeholder will use the data in other electronic learning systems (e.g., electronic tutors, tools that make recommendations for additional learning supports, or software that securely stores personal records).

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant describes a three-tiered approach to continuous improvement. The first tier focuses on feedback on technology tools and this will be accomplished by regular scheduled meetings with school personnel. The second will consist of evaluation and feedback within the schools and the third addresses the community at large. The applicant notes that information, feedback and input will be used to improve, nourish and sustain the project.</p> <p>This section could be improved by providing more specifics and structure. While the applicant says that "traditional methods of sharing information will be utilized such as data driven dialogues, student achievement scores from national, regional and state normative assessments, and assessments all based on Common Core Standards will be used as monitoring and measuring tools," it does not fully explain how it will use these approaches to provide feedback and guide the project. Because of the lack of details it is difficult to determine if the plan provides for "rigorous" improvement. Much of the plan for collecting and providing feedback is fairly informal and lacks a defined structure. For instance, the applicant describes how much of the input will be collected through informal conversations with stakeholders in stores and community events. While this can be a useful source of information and a convenient way to provide feedback, the applicant doesn't describe who will be collecting the input or how it will be used. Further, this approach does not adequately ensure input and feedback from all aspects of the community. These weaknesses prevents this criterion receiving the maximum number of points.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The information in this section mirrors that of the previous section and the review comments are also similar. While the three-tiered approach to communication and engagement is an appropriate overall structure, it does not provide sufficient structure and specificity to constitute a well-organized, well-defined plan and is not likely to be as effective as it could be with more of the details and specific steps identified. This section does not receive the maximum number of points because the applicant does not provide a more in-depth discussion of the process and strategies, with timelines, responsible parties, and a feedback loop describing how feedback will be fed back into the project to guide and inform implementation and change.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2
<p>(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides target goals for increasing the number and percentage of highly effective teachers and principals during the course of the project. From a baseline of 50% the applicant proposes to increase the percentage of highly effective teachers and principals to 60% to 75% to 90%, to eventually 100% of its teachers and principals. Performance measure goals appear to be both ambitious and achievable, also increasing from 50% through 60%, 75%, and 90% to 100%. However, it is very curious that the baseline data for all measures and student groups are at the same 50% level. This does not appear to be reasonable. The year from which the baseline data are provided is also not specified.</p> <p>An additional weakness of this section is that the applicant does not provide a narrative explaining its rationale for selecting that measure; how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the applicant's implementation success or areas of concern; or how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress.</p>		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	0
<p>(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant does not appear to have specifically addressed this section of the application.</p>		

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
<p>(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant provides a good overview of cost and expenditures included in this proposal. Technologies tools and personnel to be employed are identified and described. In most cases a clear explanation of the role the technology or personnel will fill within the project is explained.</p> <p>The applicant does not fully identify all funds that will support the project. One source of funds is mentioned, a \$337,000 RUS grant for distance education. The applicant notes that district funds will be used for the project and that one of the consortium members is planning to request a funding increase. However, no specific dollar amounts are provided.</p> <p>Expenditures, in general, are appropriate. However, insufficient information is provided to fully determine if budget amounts are reasonable to support the applicant's proposal. For instance, a sizable amount of money is budget for travel (\$20,000) but the specific travel involved is not explained well. Funds used for one-time investments versus those that will be ongoing are not clearly identified, nor is specific plan for strategies to ensure the project's long-term sustainability.</p>		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	4
<p>(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>While the applicant provides a general resolve to locate and secure the funds necessary to sustain the project, there is no a specific, clear or structured plan as to how that will be accomplished.</p>		

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7
<p>Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant identifies a number of organizations, agencies, and individuals that have committed to supporting and collaborating for the success of this project. The applicant identifies the particular resource, service, or other contribution each partner will bring to the partnership. The applicant identifies ten desired or anticipated results for this priority. Some are appropriately related to student outcomes (i.e., Children will enter kindergarten prepared to succeed in school; Area families will have the necessary tools to assist their children in the acquisition of postsecondary and workforce readiness skills.). But, some are too vague and indirectly related to students, such as "Increased student achievement and success will be the norm, not the anomaly; Professional Learning Communities at each consortium member will not exclude anyone.").</p> <p>The applicant identifies appropriate indicators to track student achievement, such as the TCAP and the ACT. There is also a plan described to examine and compile data. Data dialogues will be held in district Professional Learning Communities including educational staff, students, families and pertinent stakeholders. Each PLC will target specific grade level groups and subgroups to examine every student's record and chart progress, gaps and achievements weekly. Lead data specialists will meet via teleconferencing capabilities provided by this grant to discuss data from each district. However, the applicant does not adequately describe how it would use the data to develop and implement strategies for improving student performance and results. The applicant does not explain how the model developed will be scaled beyond the participating students.</p> <p>While the applicant describes some strategies under (4) of this priority regarding improving instruction and learning for students and their families it does not specifically address the issue of how it will integrate the services of its partnership within schools. The partners and the role they will fill are not mentioned in the discussion of this requirement. In addressing part (5) of this priority the applicant repeats the narrative provided under (E)(4). As such, it does not directly address this component of the competitive priority. For instance, a description of a decision-making process and infrastructure to select, implement, and evaluate supports to address the individual needs of participating students is not specifically provided. The plan to engage parents and families in the decision-making process is informal and lacks structure and specificity.</p>		

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score

Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met
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Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not met this priority. The plan presented is not sufficiently coherent or comprehensive. It is overly focused on technology and does not adequately explain how the technology will be used to build on the core education assurance areas to create learning environments to improve learning teaching. The applicant tends to focus more on its need for this project than on how it plans to specifically address the requirements and criteria of this notice. A restructuring of the application with a tighter focus and more cohesive organization would improve it. Perhaps it could be structured around the core education assurance areas as it is often difficult to determine which areas were being addressed by various strategies and activities described. More direct, specific, and detailed description of instruction, professional development and family support activities need to be provided. The application could also be improved by describing more direct, explicit links between data/assessments/feedback and project activities and strategies. Describe how specific activities and project components will be evaluated and specifically how the evaluation results will be used to guide and shape the direction and implementation of the project. Without a clearer, better structured application it is difficult to determine the potential and capacity of the proposed project in effecting meaningful change in student performance and educational outcomes.

Total	210	108
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# Race to the Top - District

## Technical Review Form

Application #0725CO-3 for Brush School District

### A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	2

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal does not set forth a credible vision of personalized learning to deepen and accelerate student learning

- Although the Roots to Wings proposal establishes a reform vision to address existing deficits to accelerate and deepen student learning, that vision does not meaningfully include personalized student support based on student academic interests. Instead, the three-part vision focuses on parent education, student access via video-conferencing to college preparation courses and experiences, and increasing student body access to curriculum and educator access to professional development that is not readily available locally to the rural communities served.
- There are parts of the proposal that mention elements of personalized learning in passing, such as "meeting individual student need to deepen and accelerate learning", the use of mobile and stationary devices for blended learning in the classroom, "highly individualized courses of rigorous study", "non-traditional class delivery", and that talk of personalizing learning through access to online and distance learning, however these are stand-alone references without further description of how these goals might be achieved, how instruction would change to support them, or how tools will actually be used to provide individualized curriculum, individualized learning paths, or feedback leading to individualized learning sequences.

The proposal is persuasive that addressing the identified deficits will improve student outcomes using non-personalized approaches

- The vision for providing tech centers, classes and training to improve parenting skills, academic skills needed to support student's homework, and job preparedness skills is appropriate for the community which is described as one where parents find purchasing, much less using, a PC challenging, are lacking parenting know-how, and may have trouble with reading simple menus. The theory of change that increasing the level of education and skill within the household will increase student dispositions towards education and academic success is persuasive.

- It is also persuasive to suggest that using videoconferencing to provide students with opportunities to connect with colleges and college-prep academics will improve their disposition towards higher education and likelihood of being accepted to and succeeding at a given college.
- Finally, the intention to improve instruction by increasing the professional development of educators is reasonable as is the plan to provide long-distance professional development opportunities. Particularly notable is the intention to create time each week for educators to engage in "no-holds-barred discussion" of performance data for students and educators alike - creating a professional learning community focused on data, rigor, and collegiality while building on several of the core educational assurance areas. This represents coherent reform and is an important tool for providing personalized student support. Also notable is the use of recorded lessons for self-reflection and discussion as part of personal professional development.

However, an approach to providing personalized support and tasks based on student academic interest is not meaningfully discussed

- There are assertions that access to otherwise unavailable distance-learning opportunities, STEM teaching professionals, and recorded lessons will lead to individualized courses of study and learning environments, but the proposal lacks a description of how this will occur, the structures required to support this transformation, or even an overall approach beyond the generic use of streaming video. There is some discussion of mobile devices providing "anytime, anywhere" learning, however these devices are not included in the budget, the approach to their use is not discussed, and the proposal only describes these as being available to liaisons and to families on a week-long check-out basis, limiting the opportunity for "anytime, anyplace" access for students.

The lack of a clear approach for providing personalized student support grounded in common and individual tasks that are based on student academic interests results in a low score for this section.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	8
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has provided evidence that its approach will support high-quality implementation of the project as described:

- The applicant's process was highly inclusive, involving a wide array of stakeholders in developing the approach
- The process for selecting schools was inclusive and thoughtful, setting strong conditions for collaboration and success
  - The application includes all students within all schools within all districts of the consortium. The application describes credible criteria such as shared vision that are required for all schools to participate, and all the schools within each LEA of the consortium is supportive at the Superintendent, Principal, and Technology support levels.
  - The application includes a list of actual schools with actual numbers of teachers, students, participating students from low-income families or who are high-need students is provided and were chosen in a way that meets the eligibility criteria.
  - The applicant has brought together engaged and involved schools that serve every student in their districts and described their makeup fully as required by this criterion.

However, the application does not include a description of, or evidence of how (or to what extent) stakeholder feedback was used to revise the application.

Overall, a thoughtful and thorough and inclusive approach to developing the proposal gives this section a high score.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6
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(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The plan for scale is the same as the plan for implementation as all students in the LEA are included from the start of the grant. Therefore, the quality of the plan for scale depends on the quality of the plan for the implementation.

Although the proposal does not include a high quality plan for the implementation of personalized learning, it does provide a solid plan for addressing existing deficits.

- There is a credible approach for staffing, rolling out, and supporting the three prongs of the proposal
- There is wide support among school staff, teachers, parents, students, and community and business organizations for the proposal
- There is a credible logic model for how addressing existing deficits will improve learning outcomes for all students

Nevertheless, the proposal's approach does not constitute meaningful reform, but addresses deficits due to poverty and geographic isolation. Still, because the approach is likely to improve learning outcomes, this section receives a medium score

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	4
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(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicants vision is likely to have some impact on student performance:

- The applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance by addressing existing deficits resulting from budget constraints and geographic isolation. Video conferencing will bring professional development to educators and courses to students that otherwise would not be available locally in the affected rural communities of Colorado. Adding STEM instructors and STEM materials will offer science curriculum which would otherwise be unavailable, and the use of recording and archiving technology combined with integrating these resources into families will allow them to be used efficiently. Additionally, portable video-conferencing units and mobile devices will make it possible for skills training to be brought to families, increasing the likelihood of their use and possibly impacting the dispositions and capacity of the family to support their students' academic work.
- These interventions and the plan for implementation do not, however, speak explicitly to improving the specific math and reading scores listed as metrics in the application and as a result the impact on the specific metrics is likely to be limited.

The applicant's vision does not specifically address decreasing achievement gaps, though it does address increasing performance for all sub-groups at an equal rate.

The applicant's plan does not make the case that it will significantly impact graduation rates. The applicant's vision addresses improving graduation rates through more engaging digital content on mobile devices, but the plan does not describe the structures or mechanisms or types of learning opportunities that would foster such engagement.

The applicant's plan is likely to increase college enrollment. The applicant's vision seeks to improve college enrollment through college-prep and concurrent enrollment made possible via distance learning as well as through personal connections between students and future educational institutions.

Although the most likely improved student outcomes are not well aligned with the chosen metrics, it is likely that improved outcomes will occur through addressing deficits, intervening in the family, improving teaching through collegial professional development, and providing opportunities for students with secondary learning institutions. Therefore, this section receives a medium score.

## B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	5

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application does not demonstrate a clear track record of success in the past four years

There is no evidence of improved student performance:

- The school by school metrics regarding aggregate academic achievement, academic growth, academic growth gaps, and post-secondary and workforce readiness show mixed of results with schools failing to meet the state expectations in several areas.
- The data provided is aggregated over 3 years, essentially providing a snapshot of performance, with no trend data provided that could demonstrate improvement over the past 4 years

There is no evidence provided that the applicant has successfully improved low-performing schools

However, the application has provided evidence that demonstrates the applicant's ability to make student performance data available in ways that improve participation, instruction, and services

- In section (B)(5), the application discusses a plan to use many sources of formative assessment data to provide feedback to students for goal-setting, implying its use by educators to improve instruction. Collecting, reflecting on, and using such multiple sources of formative assessment data is a significant step, demonstrating the applicants ability to

make student performance data useful to students, educators, and parents.

Overall, there is not evidence that the LEA has a record of success in increasing learning outcomes or closing achievement gaps. Still, their extensive data collection plan does demonstrate some capacity and thoughtful intent in using data by all stakeholders to improve participation, instruction, and services, leads this section to receive a medium score.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)

5

3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has successfully demonstrated evidence of a high level of transparency for Brush, but not each LEA in the consortium.

- The applicant currently makes detailed budgetary and salary information available to the public for Brush and the district
  - The district salary schedule for administrators, teachers, and other personnel are available on line
  - Actual personnel salary expenditures for all school level staff are available online broken down by certified teachers, paraprofessionals, certified substitutes, and other categories such as nurse or bus driver
  - District budgets and actual non-personnel expenditures, and purchase statements with a high level of detail as well as investment and performance reports are available on line.
  - The applicant maintains a specific financial transparency web site which links the above information with other financial information, including property taxes, internal and external audit information, monthly financial statements and purchase orders

However, because there is not evidence of the same level of transparency for all schools, this section receives a medium score.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)

10

8

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has successfully demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy to implement the plans described in their proposal. They have the autonomy to implement their proposal under Colorado state rules, regulations and guidelines and have letters of support from local and county officials.

However, their plan makes little mention of personalized learning environments - only mentioning in passing that the infrastructure used to create access to distance learning opportunities will lead to individualized courses of learning without providing specifics in that regard. Nevertheless, the plan, as is, is widely supported. Therefore this section receives a high score.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)

10

6

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated evidence of stakeholder engagement.

- The applicant has effectively described discussions, engagement, and opportunities for feedback by parents and students, local leaders, educators and administrators, and numerous local civic and advisory groups
  - However there was no evidence of how or whether the proposal was revised based on their engagement.
- The applicant offers evidence of teacher support from the LEA's with collective bargaining representation through signatures on the MOU's.
  - However, there is not evidence of teacher support for those LEA's where there is no collective bargaining representation.
- The applicant has successfully demonstrated support from key stakeholders, including student organizations. The letters from the schools and students were largely form letters, but others demonstrated a high level of engagement and commitment to providing more academic access for students via distance learning as well as support for the use of technology to build family skills and involvement.

Overall, the applicant has demonstrated evidence of reasonable stakeholder involvement and engagement giving this section medium score.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The application fails to provide a plan for analyzing the gaps from applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning

environments

- The proposal identifies 3 programs which currently have some elements of personalization or differentiation
- The proposal does not describe the gaps between this status and implementing personalized learning environments for each student
- The proposal does not describe a plan for performing such an analysis

The proposal's response to this section was primarily focused on addressing gaps in a student's performance rather than addressing gaps in the implementation of personalized learning environments.

Overall, the applicant was largely not responsive to this criterion. The information in this section of the proposal discussed several areas where the LEA's are currently providing differentiation, but did not describe the structures, processes, or approaches to current or proposed personalized learning environments nor how their current status would be assessed nor gaps identified. Therefore, this section receives a low score.

## C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	8
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has not demonstrated evidence of a plan for personalizing the learning environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instead, the application seeks funding in support of a theory of change that includes creating stronger family skills and engagement to improve early outcomes for children not yet of school age, group access to STEM and other educational opportunities via distance learning for K-12 students, credit recovery and concurrent enrollment opportunities for high school students via distance learning, and overall increased professional development for educators via distance learning.</li> <li>• Personalized learning environments are generally only mentioned in the application as outcomes of the infrastructure for videoconferencing and mobile device family check-out services, not as an end in themselves, nor are there any descriptions of the overall approach for individualized learning, much less a plan for implementing it.</li> <li>• However, there is one section in the appendix describing the plan for gifted and talented programmatic changes that addresses some development of personalized (or at least differentiated) opportunities, including: flexible grouping, grouping to offer advanced curriculum, acceleration, and dual enrollment.</li> <li>• Further the application references opportunities to improve personalization through distance learning, though the use of broadcast technology such as video conferencing implies this is intended primarily for groups or cohorts rather than individuals</li> <li>• The application also references Individual and Career Academic Plans (ICAPs) for all students from grade 6-12, but it does not lay out how these plans support personalized learning environments, personalized sequencing, mastery-based advancement, or other methods of personalizing the learning environment.</li> </ul> <p>Despite the lack of a coherent vision for personalization, the applicant has described some strengths, including the collegial approach to professional development and the use of multiple, frequent methods of formative assessment and feedback to students and parents that are likely to increase personalization to various degrees, even without a concrete plan. Also the high-level mentions of elements of personalized learning throughout the proposal along with the somewhat more detailed description of personalized learning elements for gifted students support a clear intent towards personalized learning environments even though that intent is not developed within this proposal. Therefore, this section receives a medium score.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	4
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has not provided evidence of a high quality plan to improve learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. Although the application describes plans for enriching the learning environment with badly needed STEM instructors and materials as well as video-conferencing access to additional classes, these are aimed at providing students more options rather than a personalized learning environment. Specifically, there is no high quality plan describing the structures, methods, and approaches for how content and instruction will be adapted for individual students.</p> <p>Although there is significant attention paid to increased professional development, there is no specific plan describing how this professional development will increase capacity for supporting individualized learning environments</p>		

The application receives credit for intending to have multiple forms of formative assessment, for sharing that data with students, parents, and educators, and for focusing on professional development, however there is no high-quality plan in the application that addresses how this data and professional development are applied to personalizing instruction, matching student needs with resources and approaches, or accessing high quality resources across grade levels and subjects via the video-conferencing systems described at the core of the proposal. Therefore, this section receives a low score.

## D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	7
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application has an effective approach to structuring the consortium for effective implementation of the plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal describes a structure for the consortium that involves creating a hub at the largest school district for distance education classrooms, and additional staff</li> <li>• The proposal includes using mobile recording devices and mobile video-conferencing units to enable all schools to participate</li> <li>• However, the proposal does not address flexibility in schedules and budgets needed to take advantage of distance or on-line learning</li> </ul> <p>The application does not include an effective approach to supporting students in progressing by demonstrating mastery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The approach does not include providing students the opportunity to earn credit based on mastery</li> <li>• The approach does not include providing the students multiple ways to demonstrate mastery</li> </ul> <p>The overall structure to support the proposal appears sound, though this is balanced with a lack of support for mastery-based, personalized learning, causing this section to receive a medium score.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	6
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The applicant has not included a high quality plan for project implementation through policies and infrastructures to provide stakeholders with the support and resources they need, however the response to this section does provide a credible approach to providing technical support to all stakeholders and access to all stakeholders regardless of income.</p> <p>This approach does not specifically address systems that support the export of student data via an open data format. The applications specifies the use of the Colorado Department of Education's Data Pipeline, but does not describe how or whether this is adequate to addressing the criterion for interoperable data systems.</p> <p>Given that the applicant did not include a high quality plan for project implementation support, yet giving credit for an approach that supports tech support and access for all stakeholders, and giving the benefit of the doubt to the interoperability capabilities of the Data Pipeline, this section receives a medium score.</p>		

## E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

The applicant is partially responsive to this requirement.

The applicant has described an approach for monitoring and addressing issues with the technology used in the implementation with daily to weekly check-ins with technology users and support from technology departments.

The applicant has described an approach that includes conversations based on student data with educators as part of professional development, with community groups such as accountability boards, and informally in supermarkets, at football games, or other community venues.

The strategy is not sufficiently detailed for its rigor to be evaluated and contains no description of how the discussions lead to project corrections or improvements. Nevertheless, it is likely that if the discussions are implemented well, discussions of student data will lead to discussion of project performance and such improvements will be a natural outcome. Therefore, this section receives a medium score.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)

5

4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has a plausible strategy for ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders via the professional development process and engagement with the accountability board. The applicant also has the intent to informally infuse discussion of data associated with evaluation metrics into the community, though this approach depends on the likelihood that a tight-knit, small community will automatically disseminate and discuss the information that is transparently made available.

Given the small community, it is plausible that engagement and communication do not require a particularly detailed or complex plan. Therefore, this section receives a high score.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)

5

0

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The application was weak in selecting measures and setting ambitious, achievable goals.

- The goals associated with the required measures for increasing students with access to effective teachers and principals were not credible. The goals uniformly increased from 50% at baseline to 90% at the end of the grant period and 100% thereafter.
- Most of the remaining performance measures were not well described. The high level descriptions such as "scores will increase on national assessments" or "discipline referrals will decrease" were not supplemented with any methodology for calculating the performance measure. The goals were listed as increasing from "50" to "90" over the course of the grant period and to "100" thereafter, but there were no units describing the measure nor other text to link the number to the goal. Assuming that these numbers were intended some percentage measure of successful outcomes, a uniform increase from 50 to 100 is not credible.

The application does not describe the rationale for the goals, how they will provide leading information, nor how it will be improved over time. Therefore, this section receives no points.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

0

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application does not address plans to evaluate the effectiveness of RttT - District funded activities. Therefore this section receives no points.

## F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		

The applicant's budget is successful in addressing many of the items required for the implementation of the proposed project at a high level, but there are several areas that appear unaddressed, and many of the areas fail to provide sufficient breakdowns of how the funds are used to determine the budget's adequacy and completeness.

In particular, the budget does not break down the use of equipment funds to specify the cost of each major piece of equipment. The proposal references the use of computers and mobile devices in conjunction with a You-Tube like video streaming environment, and for home use by families but does not include this equipment in its narrative or tables. The proposal references the delivery of on-line courses to students, but the budget does not include references to purchasing these courses.

The budget does refer to other sources of funding, but the references are inconsistent and unclear. There is a \$337,000 grant that has begun the work on a tech center. The section heading mentions "\$32,000,000 minimum" which is not referenced in the narrative or tables. The budget tables list \$4,000,000 in each year of the grant from other sources in a section where the clarity is further impacted by arithmetic errors. There is mention of using the funds already available to the school from their tax base. However, the overall budget does not address how these possible additional funds would be used for the project.

The budget does not explicitly separate one-time investments from ongoing operational costs.

With these exceptions, the budget overall is reasonable to accomplish the goals of the project to purchase video-conferencing and STEM equipment and hire staff to provide home liaison services and STEM instruction. Therefore, this section receives a medium score.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	2
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal does not contain a high-quality plan for the sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. The proposal is not credible in its unsubstantiated assertions that community enthusiasm will translate into a general fund that is adequate to support this program. In fact, the proposal repeatedly describes how the poverty of the area necessitates a grant that will address severe deficits such as STEM educators and professional development. Therefore this section receives a low score.

## Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	2

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The application has partially addressed the competitive preference priority, though there are several weaknesses

The depth and extent of public and private partnerships that augment school resources to address student social, emotional, or behavioral needs are limited:

- Among the organizations that help address student social, emotional, or behavioral needs are
  - Mental health clinics who accept referrals
  - Organizations that provide mentoring to at risk youth
  - Organizations that provide family support activities including, parenting classes, a home economist, and assistance for the proposal's bilingual home liaison activities

The application is weak in identifying population-level results and how to measure, track, and use them

- The application lists high level desired results such as "Area families will have the necessary tools that will enable them to have positive, nurturing relationships with members of their family and others around them" and "Professional Learning Communities at each consortium member will not exclude anyone", but does not use these for the activities of tracking results, targeting resources, scaling the model, or making improvements
- For the purposes of tracking results and using them to target resources, the application refers to another set of metrics based on academic assessments

The application does not have a strategy for scaling its model of using partnerships to augment school resources

The competitive preference priority response does not describe how the existing relationships will be leveraged to integrate education and

other services

The competitive preference priority response does not address how it would build the capacity of staff in participating schools for programs based on these partnerships

The proposal does not identify annual ambitious yet achievable population-level performance measures. The measures are described generically (such as "success to each student based upon the best of their ability performance on national, state, and local performance based assessments") but the measures are then listed as increasing uniformly from "20" to "70" during the course of the grant with "100" after the grant period. These numbers do not have an associated methodology or units, but assuming they are some measure of percentage of students exhibiting success, they are not credible.

Although the LEA's have established many valuable and relevant relationships and supporters, the proposal fails to describe how their efforts support their specific goals, integrate education and other services, or how to measure and improve progress and results. Therefore the competitive preference priority receives a low score.

## Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Not Met

### Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has not addressed how it will create personalized learning environments in this proposal.

Although some elements of Absolute Priority 1, such as increasing the effectiveness of educators and expanding student access are partially addressed by this proposal, that did not happen within the context of personalizing learning, but rather within the context of a theory of change that emphasized addressing deficits (lack of family skills and dispositions, lack of STEM educators and content, lack of accessible professional development, lack of accessible college-prep courses and college familiarization) resulting from decreasing budgets and geographic isolation.

The vision laid out by this proposal is understandable and seeks to use funds to help students get a better start in life, better family supports, better teaching, better curriculum, and better access to opportunities, but using largely traditional cohort based learning with some differentiation and an expanded access to quality courses through video-conferencing and new STEM-oriented staff. However, the proposal does not describe how personalized learning would be implemented within the LEA's in support of these goals, focusing rather on adding resources to improve existing approaches to teaching and learning.

Although Absolute Priority 1 is not met, in the approach to achieving the LEA's goals, there are two related areas where the proposal describes approaches that are reform-oriented and that would serve the development of personalized learning environments as well as the LEA's approach of mitigating deficits and these should be noted. The first is extensive data collection based on numerous metrics and frequent formative assessment. The second is including frank discussion of this data as part of a comprehensive professional development approach where educators have time each week to meet and discuss their professional work together and where they have access to professional development experiences that would not be accessible without a distance learning system.

Also, there are elements of personalized learning that are mentioned in passing throughout the proposal, though they are not developed, such as "meeting individual student need to deepen and accelerate learning", the use of mobile and stationary devices for blended learning in the classroom, "highly individualized courses of rigorous study", "non-traditional class delivery", and that talk of personalizing learning through access to online and distance learning, however these are stand-alone references without further description of how these goals might be achieved, how instruction would change to support them, or how tools will actually be used to provide individualized curriculum, individualized learning paths, or feedback leading to individualized learning sequences.

Total	210	91
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